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TELEGRAM

May 12, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 2329 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: PREL, KPAO, KPAL
Captions: None
Subject: UAEG WELCOMES PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ON THE MIDDLE EAST
Ref: None

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 02329

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: P/M ECON RSO AMB DCM

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CDA: RAALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: A/DCM:TEWILLIAMS
CLEARED: POL:STW

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9930
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 002329

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL 05/12/08
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAEG WELCOMES PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ON THE MIDDLE EAST

REF: STATE 122033

¶1. (U) Classified by Charge D'Affaires Richard A. Albright, for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶2. (C) Charge drew from reftel points and provided a copy of the President's speech to MFA Assistant U/S Abdullah Rashid Al-Nuaimi, May 12. Al-Nuaimi said that President's speech was welcome and timely. It was particularly useful that Secretary Powell was out in the region to follow-up on the speech, the MFA official observed. Both the Palestinians and the Israelis "need to get their act together," and both Arafat and Sharon need to do a lot of work internally. The important thing is to achieve results. Abu Mazen is "capable, pragmatic and we trust his vision." There is also some sign of hope from Sharon's

side. But Al-Nuaimi stressed repeatedly that the process could not be permitted to derail because of terrorist attacks -- "these will happen, but should not be allowed to hijack the process." Continued U.S. engagement would be key to alleviate the tensions between the two sides and to allow for on the ground disengagement between Israeli security forces and the Palestinian population.

13. (C) Turning to the President's call for a free trade agreement with the Middle East in ten years, the MFA official said this was a commendable step. It would be important to ensure that this essentially economic matter did not get placed into a political framework, but he noted "we all favor free trade." Al-Nuaimi observed that the unstated goal of the U.S.-GCC Economic Dialogue is free trade between the U.S. and the GCC, but that "for some reason we have tended to get bogged down in the minutiae of our economic relationship and have lost sight of the real goal." In that context, he suggested that an FTA with the GCC might usefully top the agenda for the Dialogue.

ALBRIGHT